

Top Secret

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LATE ITEM**CAMBODIA**

There were no major problems in last night's evacuation from Phnom Penh. The last US helicopter carrying the rear guard of the 360-man US marine security force lifted off from the landing zone near the US embassy compound shortly after midday Phnom Penh time. The entire evacuation took a little over four hours. Some 260 persons were evacuated, including about 140 Americans. There were no reports of any panic or incidents at the landing zone and no confirmed reports of any hostile fire.

In a telephone conversation with Saigon just before he left, Ambassador Dean reported that a number of Cambodian officials had placed their families aboard the helicopters, but that most of the cabinet members elected to stay. Republican Party strongman Sirik Matak--who ranks high on the list of "traitors" the communists say they will execute--was the only high ranking official specifically mentioned as staying. Acting president Saukham Koy was one of the few officials who left. Ambassador Dean reported that the cabinet was meeting to decide its next course of action.

* * * *

According to the last reports from US defense attachés in Phnom Penh, communist forces have widened the gap in government defenses north of Pochentong airport but made no effort yesterday to push closer to the airfield. Inconclusive ground fighting occurred on other battlefronts around the capital.

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Artillery and rocket fire on Pochentong airport intensified yesterday, forcing the cancellation of the last two DC-8 flights from Saigon. Phnom Penh yesterday had an 11-day supply of ammunition, 10 days of rice, and 13 days of fuel.

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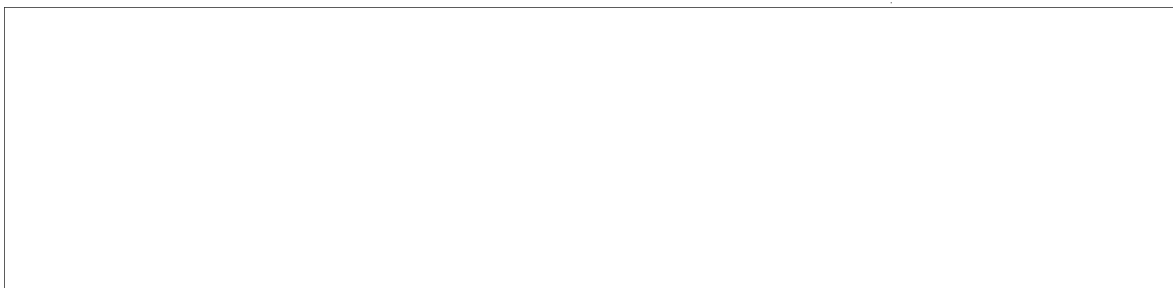
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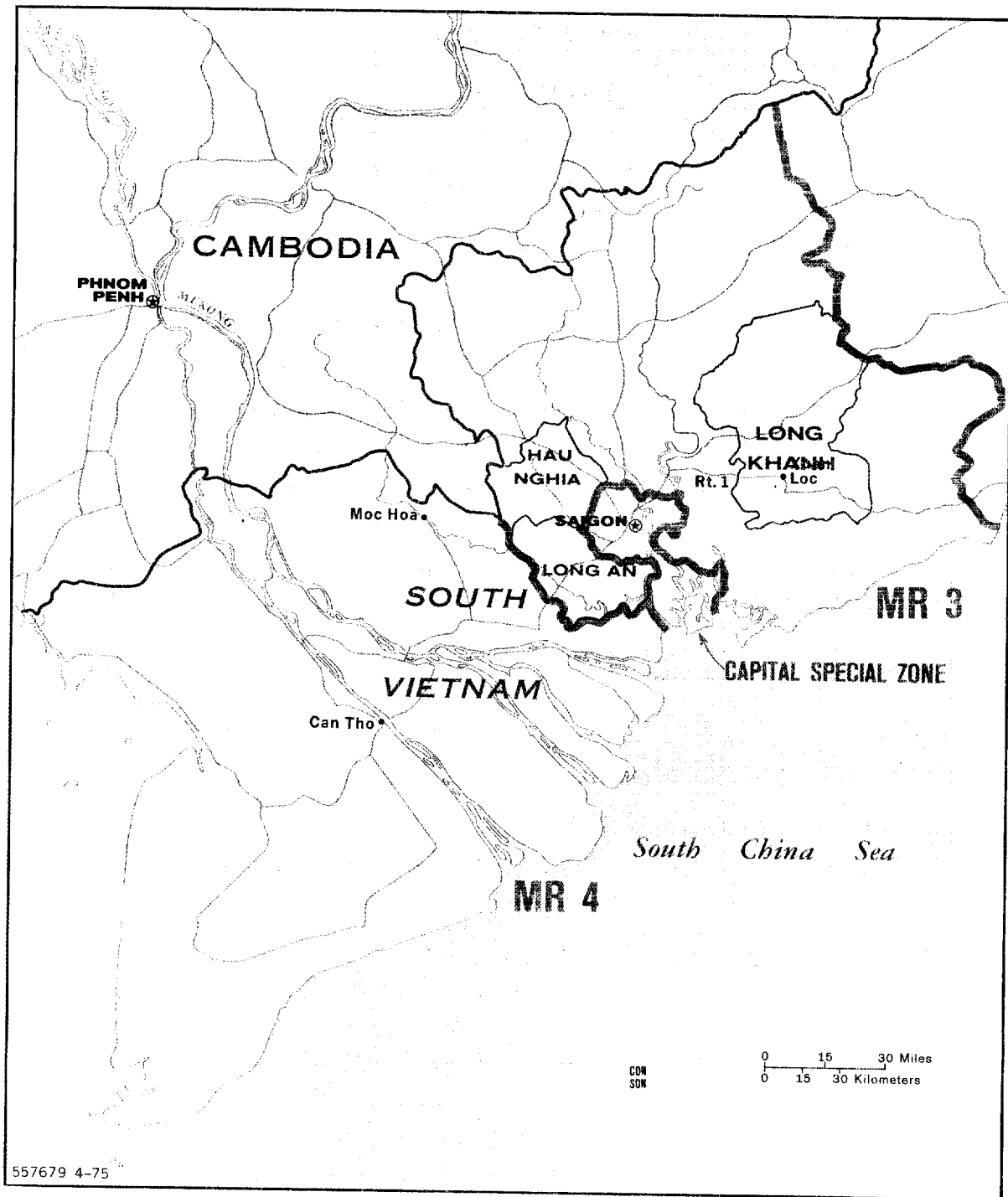


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SOUTH VIETNAM

Heavy fighting is continuing in the Xuan Loc area, and the government reports this morning that it has pushed the North Vietnamese out of the town for the third consecutive day.

South Vietnamese airborne troops arrived in Xuan Loc on April 11, and a relief column is encountering stiff resistance as it pushes eastward along Route 1 toward the town. Saigon plans to move an additional armored unit to Xuan Loc. The reinforcements will give the government the equivalent of about two divisions at Xuan Loc [REDACTED]

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There are now three communist divisions near Xuan Loc. A prisoner claims all of the 7th Division moved into the area [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] They join the 6th Division which initiated the attacks on the town.

Communist attacks have declined in the northern delta, and the government appears to have the initiative. South Vietnamese troops overran a communist base area near the Cambodia border, killing several dozen communists and capturing a substantial amount of supplies. This probably will temporarily disrupt communist plans for attacks in Hau Nghia and Long An provinces. Farther south, the communists early today continued to probe government defenses around Can Tho and also attacked two district towns along Route 4.

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VIETNAM

US efforts to bring Vietnamese orphans to the US and to assist in the evacuation of refugees are prompting especially bitter comment from the communists. A Provisional Revolutionary Government statement of April 7 denied that there are any "problems concerning war refugees" anywhere in South Vietnam and charged that the US is forcing people to "leave their native land." The evacuation plan was described as "nothing but a new scheme aimed at intervening in South Vietnam."

Similar condemnations are coming from Premier Pham Van Dong and the authoritative "commentator" in the North Vietnamese press.

The Provisional Revolutionary Government also charged that the US is bringing in warships for the "so-called protection and evacuation of Americans" and claimed that all Americans in South Vietnam "are military personnel disguised as civilians." This is the first time the Viet Cong have implied that all Americans in Vietnam are military advisers and demanded that they be withdrawn immediately.

The Chinese press has echoed Hanoi's criticism of US involvement in the "so-called refugee problem," replaying large parts of both Viet Cong and North Vietnamese statements. Peking, however, excised the most stinging North Vietnamese indictments of the US and played down communist battlefield victories in the South. Peking has not offered any original commentary on the subject.

Soviet propaganda on the subject has followed Hanoi's lead, but has been less strident. The Soviets rely on Western news reports that question the motives for the airlift.

The Soviets have also pulled a few punches on the US role in these developments. At a dinner honoring Yugoslav Premier Bijedic, for example, Premier Kosygin attacked Saigon, but not the US, for violations of the Paris agreement.

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The East Germans have picked up the Vietnamese communist line and harshly criticized the US for the "cold-blooded kidnaping of Vietnamese children." This is the sharpest anti-US invective Pankow has used since East German - US diplomatic relations were established last fall.

The heavy-handed East German commentary stands in sharp contrast to the sparse and low-key coverage by other East European countries.

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OAU

The foreign ministers of the Organization of African Unity wound up their special meeting in Dar es Salaam yesterday with a declaration that approved negotiations with South Africa in order to bring about majority rule in Rhodesia and independence for Namibia (South-West Africa). The declaration, however, also called upon OAU states to help southern African nationalists prepare for intensified guerrilla warfare should their goals not be attained through negotiations. In addition, it called for a tightening of existing boycott measures against South Africa until it ends its apartheid policy.

The declaration is a significant gain for Tanzanian President Nyerere and the other African leaders who have cooperated with South African Prime Minister Vorster in pushing black Rhodesian nationalists and Prime Minister Ian Smith toward a negotiated constitutional settlement. Nyerere had formulated the new boycott measures in order to counteract militant calls for repudiation of efforts to mediate the Rhodesian conflict.

On the other hand, Vorster had hoped the meager concessions Smith has made to Rhodesian nationalists at his behest might soften the OAU boycott of South Africa.

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PORTUGAL

Portugal's major political parties yesterday signed an agreement presented to them by the ruling Armed Forces Movement, formally giving up the opportunity for civilian control of the government for at least three years.

Only six of the twelve parties that are allowed to participate in the election on April 25 for a constituent assembly approved the document. President Costa Gomes acknowledged that the Movement's platform was not enthusiastically endorsed by all, saying "no event in our history has ever been totally above criticism." Although Information Minister Jesuino has said no action will be taken against parties refusing to agree to the Movement's plan, some politicians fear the dissenting parties--five on the extreme left and the moderate Monarchists--will be declared illegal.

The final version of the Movement's platform, presented to the parties last Wednesday, included only a few minor changes based on suggestions made by the moderate parties last week.

The signing of the pact means that the constituent assembly will do little more than rubber-stamp a constitution based on the military's proposals. However, the election will be an important indication of the political sympathies of the Portuguese people.

The Popular Democrats and the Socialists hope their showing in the election will influence the Movement to look upon them more favorably and to turn away from the Communists. Three embassy sources have indicated, however, that the committee of inquiry looking into the coup of March 11 may implicate these parties in their preliminary conclusions, which will probably be published a few days before the election. The sources believe that even unsupported charges would hurt the two parties at the polls.

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The moderate, non-communist parties expect to receive a boost from the church. The church's official position has been that it will not support any political party, but it does plan to issue a pastoral letter within the next few days telling the people that voting is a Christian as well as a civic duty. Parish priests will urge their parishioners to vote for parties espousing Christian values, which will amount to discreet support of the moderate parties.

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NATO-SPAIN

Most NATO members remain opposed to close ties between the alliance and Spain.

On April 10, several NATO permanent representatives indicated that major political changes will have to occur in Spain before their governments will stop opposing Spanish membership in or association with NATO. The British, Dutch, Norwegians, and Danes are strongly opposed to a Spanish connection. The Scandinavians, long the most obstinate opponents of Spanish membership or association, did not attend the meeting.

Spanish Foreign Minister Cortina recently told [] that while Spain does not intend to apply for membership in NATO, it does wish to cooperate with the alliance and to obtain some sort of security guarantee. The Spaniards desire an explicit, publicly acknowledged relationship with NATO that could be exploited politically. The meeting of NATO ambassadors on Thursday indicated, however, that the alliance members will have trouble agreeing to even private, informal NATO ties with Spain.

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AUSTRALIA

Canberra has imposed additional restrictions on imports, including ball bearings, and is studying a long list of commodities for similar treatment in the future.

The imposition of restrictions, which began in January, has raised concern among Australia's trading partners about Canberra's basic trade policy. They fear that other countries may take similar courses of action. Canberra has argued that the restrictions are temporary and are justified by the rapid increase in imports, citing a 28-percent volume increase in imports last year compared with an average of 2 percent for the major developed countries as a whole.

The restrictions will impact most heavily on Japan, but the US will also be affected. About 15 percent of Australia's steel products and ball bearings now under quota restrictions, for example, come from the US. The US is a major supplier of several items that are under study, including about one third of Australia's imports of air conditioners and two thirds of Australia's imports of carpets.

Almost 10 percent of Australia's imports are now under some form of restriction. Earlier in the year, a variety of textile and clothing items, autos, tires, footwear, steel products, refrigerators, clothes dryers, and washing machines were put under controls. Additional textile and clothing items, plastic products, air conditioners, carpets, and consumer electronics equipment, including television sets, are under study and could come under restrictions in the near future.

The measures will cut sharply into Australia's imports of the restricted items. The quota on autos, for example, will hold arrivals this year to about half of the number imported last year. The quota on imports of rolled steel will hold them to about one fourth the 1974 level.

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Kenya: Two large bombs exploded yesterday near the Mombasa residence currently occupied by President Kenyatta. The incidents, like several bombings in Nairobi in February and March, presumably were the work of the President's political opponents. Over the past several weeks, Kenyatta's prestige has declined as a result of the murder of J. M. Kariuki, an outspoken critic of the President and a popular spokesman for the country's have-nots. It is widely believed that top government officials close to the President were involved in Kariuki's death.

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